

Wanderers race back to the top

WYCOMBE Wanderers kept up their challenge by going top of the Rothmans Isthmian League and put further pressure on the other title contenders with a well deserved triumph over Woking at Kingfield on Tuesday night.

By working far harder and using the ball to greater advantage, Wanderers dominated 80 per cent of the match. Their superior skills on a difficult surface stood them in good stead but it was their aggressive running and sheer hard graft that was so creditable.

None tried harder than Geoff Anthony who did much good work in covering back while Howard Kennedy, Terry Reardon and Dave Alexander kept a firm grip on midfield throughout the 90 minutes. Reardon's cultured touches can easily be taken for granted but his depth of vision is at times truly remarkable.

John Delaney and Tony Horseman both deserve special praise. Neither player was anything like fully fit after 'flu and injury respectively but both did well, especially the Blues centre half who was in dominant form at the back. Horseman only played because both Bruce Macrae and Dylan Evans were down with 'flu, Dylan suffering from his second dose in a month.

The form of Wycombe's back four is demonstrated by the fact that goalkeeper Peter Spittle, playing against his old club, was never seriously tested in the first half. Woking were only a shadow of the side that held Wycombe to a 1-1 draw last month and their passing was atrocious at times. True, they did come back into the game after reducing the leeway to 2-1, but had the Blues taken more chances, the home side would never have been in the match.

Wanderers looked the more effective and adventurous side from the start. Anthony wasted a good chance by volleying over the top after Roger Steer headed a Delaney free kick straight to him and in the eighth minute, Alexander almost surprised Fred Dakin with a snap shot to the near post.

Wycombe forced three corners before Woking won their first which Graham Cooper headed wide when well placed. Soon afterwards, Wycombe took the lead with a beautifully executed move involving three defenders.

It started when Wycombe's

Woking 1, Wycombe Wanderers 2 Report by STUART EARP

sixth corner was headed out of defence. Paul Birdseye gathered the ball, looked up and sent a glorious 40 yard pass to Delaney, who had stayed onside. Delaney ran into the box but instead of shooting wildly, squared the ball across for Keith Mead to beat Dakin's outstretched hand with a firm shot. It was a simple goal which brought a touch of real class to the game.

Delaney was unfortunate to have his name taken in the 27th minute for deliberate handball. Caught by the bounce, Delaney instinctively grabbed the ball as it sailed over his head on halfway. There was little danger to Wycombe but referee Cox felt the action warranted a booking which will cost Wanderers a few bob in the sportsmanship pool at the end of the season. It was their third caution of the season — their 'worst' disciplinary record in three years of Rothmans football.

The Blues continued to dictate events throughout the half and their constant probing always looked likely to produce another score. It came in the 43rd minute. From a throw-in, Horseman back headed high into the box where Kennedy caught the defence in a tangle. He had a free header and sent it down by the 'keeper's ankles. Dakin did well to block the first effort but Howard rammed home the second chance in a flash.

Wanderers continued their successful tactics in the second

half and Mick Holifield, playing up front, should have scored early on when he headed over from another corner. Then Birdseye sent in a powerful drive just past an upright.

At this stage, Wycombe were giving their opponents a footballing lesson by running hard, cutting down on time and space and supporting each other constantly. It seemed they would have the entire match their own way when Woking hit back with a goal in the 57th minute. The defence failed to cut out Neil Brister's cross to the far post where top goalscorer Alan Morton headed back across the box. Steve Cosham nodded simply home from close range.

This put the Surrey club back in the game for a while and with Horseman struggling, manager Brian Lee brought on Dave Bullock at right back and sent Birdseye up into the forward line. The versatile Birdseye soon made a physical impact on the Woking defence and later had the best chance of the second half to seal the result.

Spittle handed out a verbal lashing to his defence after they had failed to cut out a dangerous Cosham cross but generally, the 'keeper was untroubled as Woking's challenge petered out due to the increasing number of errors.

Kennedy netted in the 73rd minute but was ruled offside and 10 minutes later, Birdseye spurned a great opportunity when

Kennedy put him through on the edge of the box. Turner mistimed his tackle which left Paul with only Dakin to beat but instead of taking the ball around the 'keeper, he tried a left foot shot which sliced off his boot well wide of the target.

In the end, that miss scarcely mattered as Wanderers finished the match full of running. What was slightly disturbing, however, was the fact that if Woking had snatched a late equaliser, Wanderers would have been well and truly robbed of a couple of points they richly deserved.

WOKING: F. Dakin; R. Steer, N. Turner, M. Whatford, G. Cooper; N. Brister, D. Cotterill, A. Brown, R. Forbes; A. Morton, S. Cosham. Sub R. Poole (not used).

WYCOMBE: P. Spittle; P. Birdseye, K. Mead, J. Delaney, R. Eaton; D. Alexander, T. Reardon, H. Kennedy; G. Anthony, A. Horseman (sub. D. Bullock 62 mins), M. Holifield.

Referee: A. Cox (Buckhurst Hill).
Half-time: 0-2. **Goalscorers,** Wycombe — Mead (23), Kennedy (43).
Woking — Cosham (57).

ROTHMANS ISTHMIAN LEAGUE									
DIVISION ONE									
	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts		
Wycombe	36	20	8	8	57	38	68		
Dagenham	33	20	6	7	75	41	66		
Dulwich	38	20	5	13	60	33	65		
Ilford	34	19	7	8	48	29	64		
Staines	37	19	7	11	45	29	64		
Enfield	29	18	7	4	56	22	61		
Slough	38	17	10	11	57	41	61		
Hendon	36	16	10	10	47	34	58		
L'head	36	16	9	11	58	48	57		
Tooting	32	16	8	9	54	35	56		
Sutton	34	15	10	9	60	42	55		
Hayes	39	10	18	11	41	42	48		
Hitchin	38	13	9	16	42	50	48		
Woking	40	13	8	19	53	59	47		
W'stow	38	12	10	16	48	56	46		
Kingst	36	13	7	16	49	75	46		
Barking	37	13	6	18	54	61	45		
Bishops	33	10	9	14	34	37	39		
Oxford	35	8	8	19	26	53	32		
L'stone	37	7	10	20	33	59	31		
Southall	35	7	8	20	42	59	29		
Clapton	40	3	2	35	19	111	11		